



# apple granny

ORCHARDISTS Maria Smith and her husband Thomas sailed to Australia from England in 1838.

When they arrived in Sydney they bought some land on the edge of a 'common' – a place available for gardening to all people who lived nearby – known as the Field of Mars. A creek ran nearby.

Maria and Thomas were good farmers. No just nipping down to the supermarket in the Toyota for them whenever they needed something. They grew most of their own food, including fruit trees – apples, pears, nectarines, oranges, apricots and strawberries. As well as buying plants from other farmers, they also raised seedling-apples.

In 1868 Maria asked some neighbours, including Edwin Small, to look at an apple that she had raised which was growing by her creek. She said the tree was a 'sport' – a surprise seedling. It had grown from some French crab-apple seeds which she had got from Tasmania. It was, as they say, 'a ripper'.

Maria died in 1870, but her apple-tree lived on. In 1890 her 'Smith's seedling' was exhibited at the Castle Hill agricultural show. In 1891 its fruit won the prize for the best cooking apple.

Unlike Maria, the 'Granny Smith' has a light green skin. It has a sharp taste when eaten raw. When cooked its sweetness more than doubles.